

REINVESTING IN YOUTH

A Regional Partnership

2004 Year End Report

January 29, 2005

Dear Friends of Reinvesting in Youth:

We are pleased to provide you with this report on Reinvesting in Youth's activities in 2004. As we move forward into 2005, we want to acknowledge that RIY has been able to achieve its substantial successes to date only because of the contributions and support provided by the many partners who share RIY's commitment to changing young people's lives for the better.

I. Research - Based Program Expansion

The centerpiece of Reinvesting in Youth's "Reinvestment" strategy is the expansion of research-based interventions that have a proven track record in reducing juvenile recidivism and in saving more public dollars than they cost. There has been significant progress made since the initiative was launched in 2003.

Two new Functional Family Therapy teams and a Multi-Systemic Therapy team were launched in the second half of 2003. Based on short-term demand, the number of Functional Family therapists on RIY funded teams has been temporarily reduced from eight to six and the number of Multi-Systemic therapists has been increased from four to six. Expansion of Aggression Replacement Training for youth at high risk of perpetrating violence was implemented in November 2004. When they reach full capacity these programs will serve 336 moderate to high-risk youth and families annually.

The three research-based interventions are being implemented through multi-agency teams, generally involving one therapist per agency. The multi-agency team approach has been used to build capacity in community-based agencies. As could be expected, multi-agency teams are more challenging to administer, and King County has had to work closely with the involved agencies to develop more effective coordination and to assure quality assurance in the delivery of services. Important lessons have been learned and significant progress has been made since June of 2004.

Additional resources have been added to the RIY 2004-05 budgets to assure full implementation of quality assurance for Multi-systemic therapy. Quality Assurance for Functional Family Therapy and Aggression Replacement Training are in place.

II. Capacity Building

RIY seeks to reduce the disproportional involvement of youth of color in the juvenile justice system by strengthening the capacity of community based agencies that serve substantial numbers of youth of color. The strategy focuses on promising program evaluations, cultural

competency training and other technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of community-based agencies to serve youth at high risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Reinvesting in Youth has allocated \$848,000 over 2003-2006 for this purpose.

Promising Program Evaluation –

In January of 2004, RIY and Davis Ja & Associates entered into a consultant service agreement to carry out evaluations for promising, but unproven community-based programs. Phase 1, including the selection of six community-based agencies, was completed on April 12, 2004. The second phase began with site visits to the six agencies to determine each agency's Management Information System (MIS) capability. Evaluation designs were substantially completed by September. Phase 3, implementation, began in October. RIY is providing each of the participating agencies with substantial support in the form of hardware, software and consultant technical assistance in order to get them ready for evaluation implementation. The evaluations will focus both on outcomes and on feedback for continuous improvement.

These evaluations present significant technical challenges, particularly in identifying comparison groups for programs that serve diverse populations with flexible interventions. Important lessons are being learned that will be useful as King County, the City of Seattle and other youth services funders attempt to develop both rigorous and practical methods for local youth program evaluation.

Cultural Competency Assessment and Training – RIY and the Minority Executive Directors Coalition of King County (MEDC) finalized and signed a contract on June 3, 2004. This initial contract provides for cultural competency assessments, action plans and trainings for the six agencies that have been selected to receive promising program evaluation support. The Cultural Competency Oversight Committee approved MEDC's work plan on June 9, 2004. MEDC conducted a cultural competency orientation workshop and completed cultural competency assessments, and action plans for the six agencies. Technical assistance to support implementation of the action plans is underway.

Through our experience working with these first six agencies, we expect to learn more about what is needed for the development of a *system* of cultural competency assessment and training for community based agencies in King County. A number of other non profit agencies in King County have expressed an interest in receiving cultural competency assessments, action plans and trainings. We expect to use RIY technical assistance dollars to bring the cultural competency program to eight new agencies in 2005.

Technical Assistance/Best Practices –The emphasis of RIY's technical assistance program is on the strengthening of community-based agencies' capacity to reduce the disproportional involvement of youth of color in the justice system. Since the beginning of 2004, RIY has contributed \$15,000 to the development of an "Elements of Successful Programs" portfolio focused on programs that serve high risk youth. A final draft has been submitted to King County. A group of local and regional government stakeholders and agency representatives will meet in January to discuss potential strategies to distribute, administer, and implement the elements to community based agencies throughout King County. RIY expects to spend \$200,000 to bring the *Elements of Successful Programs* into community-based agencies over the course of 2005-06.

III. Funding Sustainability / Savings Reinvestment

Grant funds totaling \$1.75 million from the Gates, Allen, JEHT, Seattle, and Annie E. Casey foundations have been secured to support RIY activities through the middle of 2005. A renewal of the Allen and Gates funding is needed in the next 12 months to sustain the continued implementation of the program into 2006.

The City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle and 11 suburban cities have continued to fund the administrative costs of RIY (\$236,000 in 2004 and a projected \$240,000 in 2005). Local government support has been a crucial factor in our ability to attract foundation support and will also be vital as we lobby the legislature for systems reforms in 2005-06.

RIY is built to ensure long-term sustainability even in the face of chronic budget constraints. The centerpiece of the RIY sustainability strategy is to demonstrate that it is feasible to capture and reinvest a portion of the taxpayer savings generated by proven, cost-effective interventions to create a permanent funding source for prevention and intervention.

In 2002 and 2003 RIY sponsored state legislation to fund a study to develop recommendations for future state legislation implementing a savings reinvestment strategy. In 2002 the legislation passed both houses but was caught in a governor's veto that struck the funding for numerous studies. In 2003 the Washington State Legislature approved not one but two studies to develop recommendations for potential state legislation that encourages local government investment in research-proven prevention and early intervention programs by reimbursing local governments for a portion of the savings that accrue to the state as the result of local investments in such programs."

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy completed its study including recommendations for the implementation of a savings reinvestment strategy in July 2004. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee completed a second study in December 2004. The findings and conclusions of these studies promise to add momentum to RIY's efforts to secure passage of savings reinvestment legislation in 2005.

RIY has worked with a bi-partisan group of legislators from its Steering Committee and others to draft implementing legislation. RIY bills have been introduced in both houses of the legislature with bi-partisan sponsorship.

RIY's objective is to secure passage of this legislation in 2005. It will not be easy to achieve success on the first attempt, given the complexity and novelty of what is being proposed. There is perhaps a 50-50 chance that a second try in 2006 will be needed. Should this be necessary, we believe that it will still be possible to eliminate the need for additional foundation support after 2006 as originally planned.

One of the challenges to successful legislation is the possibility that legislators from other parts of the state will consider the RIY proposal to be a "King County" proposal. The legislation has been drafted to specifically encourage smaller counties to apply. In addition, RIY is proposing to add \$120,000 to the 2006 budget to serve as the local government start-up "match" to make it easier for small counties to participate in the 2-year pilot program for FY 2006-07.

A second RIY strategy for sustainability is the realignment of existing funds. The 2004- 2006 operating budgets for RIY intervention program implementation include a total of \$511,000 in realigned funds from City of Seattle, King County and community-based agency sources. King

County, in the face of continuing painful cuts in general fund programs, appropriated an additional \$208,000 per year in new general fund dollars for evidence –based program expansion for 2003 and 2004. The King County budget for 2005 increased the county’s general fund contribution for program implementation to \$313,000.

IV. Evaluation of Results

Rigorous, independent evaluations pegged to strategic benchmarks are central to RIY’s success. Evaluation will prove that the savings necessary for financial sustainability are being generated. The need to prove actual savings is a discipline that distinguishes RIY from most other system reform efforts.

The RIY program continues to include the following evaluation design elements:

- ♦ **Proven programs** – The original evaluation plan for proven programs focused on faithfulness to program design during implementation, changes in disproportionality and simple outcome measures. The total budget for 2003-06 is \$230,000, of which \$186,000 is provided from RIY foundation sources. The evaluation consulting firm, TriWest Group, completed the evaluation design for the evidence-based program expansion in April 2004. The completed design provides for much more rigorous evaluation of outcomes than was originally expected within the limits of the original budget. Implementation is underway.
- ♦ **Unproven programs** – (See discussion under Capacity Building above.) Evaluation will focus on determining the extent to which recidivism is reduced in selected home-grown programs as well as providing continuing feedback to improve program implementation and agency operations. Total cost for 2003-06 is \$453,000. Implementation is underway.
- ♦ **Systems change** – Evaluation will focus on qualitative assessments and achievement of major benchmarks for policy change. Implementation is expected to get underway in early 2005.

V. Conclusion

While there are many challenges still to be met by RIY including final passage of the savings reinvestment legislation, significant progress is being made on many fronts. Each of our activities is governed by our dual objectives: 1) to improve the lives of individual youth and families; and 2) to contribute to the development of *systems* that will sustain juvenile justice and youth services reforms after the Reinvesting in Youth project is complete.

Sincerely,

Norm Maleng
King County Prosecutor
Chair, RIY Steering Committee

Jim Street
Director, Reinvesting in Youth